

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PORT O 00768 091515Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2124
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
USINT HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 0768

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, PEPR, ECON, XL, CU, TD
SUBJECT: CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REF: STATE 56727

1. DESPITE EXISTENCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN T&T AND CUBA, AIR LINK THROUGH CUBANA, AND OCCASIONAL VISITS BY NONRESIDENT CUBAN DIPLOMATIC, TRADE, PRESS AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES, THE CUBANS GENERALLY HAVE KEPT A LOW PROFILE IN T&T AND THEIR ACTIVITIES HAVE REMAINED AT MUCH THE SAME LEVEL OVER THE RECENT PAST. SINCE CUBANS HAVE INVITED VARIOUS TRINIDADIANs TO VISIT HAVANA IN RECENT YEARS AND HAVE COURTED THEM AT INTERNATIONAL GATHERINGS ABROAD, WE ASSUME THAT CUBA'S RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL OF KNOWN ACTIVITY HERE RESULTS MORE FROM AN UNRECEPTIVE ATTITUDE BY THE GOTT AND THE RESULTING LOCAL POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT THAN FROM ANY LACK OF INTEREST IN T&T ON CUBA'S PART.

2. CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN T&T CAN BE DIVIDED INTO THE FOLLOWING THREE CATEGORIES:
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A. OFFICIAL CONTACTS (DIPLOMATIC, COMMERCIAL, PRESS, ETC.). ASIDE FROM A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY EARLY IN 1977, WHICH APPEARED TO REPRESENT CUBAN EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE HERE, OFFICIAL CONTACTS HAVE BEEN ROUTINE AND UNPUBLICIZED. THE MAIN ACTIVITY HAS BEEN OCCASIONAL VISITS BY

CUBAN EMBASSY STAFF FROM KINGSTON AND PRENSA LATINA REPS. THE ONLY KNOWN RESIDENT OFFICIAL CUBANS HERE ARE TWO CUBANA EMPLOYEES, WHO HAVE AN OFFICE AT PIARCO AIRPORT.

B. PROPAGANDA. T&T MEDIA OCCASIONALLY CARRY FEATURE MATERIAL ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF LIFE IN CUBA, SOME OF WHICH IS FAVORABLE, AND SOME MILDLY CRITICAL. SOME OF THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN WRITTEN BY LOCAL ACADEMICS AND OTHER INTERESTED OBSERVERS, BUT SOME OF IT MAY BE PLANTED PROPAGANDA.

C. EXCHANGES OF PEOPLE. ALTHOUGH A CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT IS IN EFFECT BETWEEN T&T AND CUBA, WE HAVE SEEN LITTLE EVIDENCE OF ITS OPERATION. A FEW STUDENTS, JOURNALISTS, UNION LEADERS AND OTHERS VISIT CUBA FROM TIME TO TIME, SOME OF THEM INVITED BY GOC (GEORGE WEEKES OF OILFIELDS WORKERS' TRADE UNION, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS TOLD US HE WAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS INVITATIONS TO VISIT CUBA). EARLY THIS YEAR LOCAL LEFT-WING ORGANIZATIONS ANNOUNCED PLANS TO SEND 100 YOUNG PEOPLE TO WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL IN HAVANA THIS SUMMER. THAT FESTIVAL, AND EFFORTS TO SEND PEOPLE TO IT, WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RECEIVE INCREASING PUBLIC ATTENTION HERE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

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3. IN SUM, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO US OF STEPPED-UP CUBAN "OUTREACH" TO T&T, A SITUATION WE ATTRIBUTE BOTH TO AN UNRECEPTIVE GOTT AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT CUBAN OVERTURES AT PRESENT SEEM DIRECTED AT THE LEADERS OF GUYANA AND JAMAICA, WHO ARE AT LOGGERHEADS WITH ERIC WILLIAMS. WE WILL REPORT ANY DEVELOPMENTS POSSIBLY SIGNALLING A CHANGE IN THE LEVEL OF CUBAN ACTIVITIES.
FOX

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